1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

and Mode, after the manner characteristic of primitive thought;[1] so that it may perhaps be translated "Our-Great-(or Strong-)Kind-Now-Here". The combination of the two syllables affords a characteristically colloidal connotation of concepts, common enough in primitive use, but not expressible by any single term of modern language; in a descriptive way the complete term might be interpreted as "Our-Living-Ancient-Strongkind-Elderwomen-Now-Here," while with the utmost elision the interpretation could hardly be reduced beyond "Our-Great-Motherfolk-Here" without fatal loss of original signification. It should be noted that the designation is made to cover the animals of Seriland (at least the zoic tutelaries of the tribe) and fire as well as the human folk.

The proper tribe name is of no small interest as an index to primitive thought, and as an illustration of an early stage in linguistic development. It is significant, too, as an expression of the matronymic organization, and of the leading rôle played by the clanmothers in the simple legislative and judicative affairs of the tribe; and it is especially significant as an indication of the intimate association of fire and life in primitive thought.

The designation "Seri", with its several variants, is undoubtedly an alien appellation, and neither Mashém nor Kolusio could throw light on its origin or meaning, though they did not apparently regard it as opprobrious. Peñafiel describes it as an Opata term; and Pimentel's Opata vocabulary[2] (extracted from the grammar and dictionary compiled by Padre Natal Lombardo) indicates its meaning satisfactorily, albeit without special reference to the tribe. The key term in this vocabulary is "*Sérrái*, velocidad de la persona que corre." The accent over the first vowel serves to indicate prolongation, so that term and definition may be rendered, literally, *se-errái*, speed of the person who runs. Analysis of the term shows that the essential factor or root is that introduced elsewhere in the same vocabulary as "*Erv*, llegar." Now, "llegar" is a protean and undifferentiated Spanish verb neuter, without satisfactory English equivalent; it may be interpreted as arrive, reach, attain, fetch, endure, continue, accomplish, suffice, ascend, or mount to, while as a verb active and verb reflective its equivalents are approach, join, proceed a little distance, unite, etc; it may be said to imply movement or process with a centripetal connotation—i. e., a connotation antithetic to that of the expressive irregular verb "ir" in its protean forms, including the ubiquitous and ever present "vamos" (an American slang equivalent of the Castilian verb "llegar" in certain of its phases is the strong interjectory phrase, "get together"). The prefix *se* is merely an intensive, running not merely through the Opata, but throughout various tongues of the Piman stock. In his extensive vocabulary of the Pima and Papago Indians of Arizona (1871),[3] Captain

[1] Cf. The Beginning of Mathematics, in the American Anthropologist, new series, vol. 1, 1898, p. 664.

[2] Vocabulario Manual de la Lengua Opata, por Francisco Pimentel. Boletin de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, tomo x, 1862, pp. 287–333.

[3] In the archives of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

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blood counts as nothing in the establishment and maintenance of the clan organization. Thus the females alone are the blood-carriers of the clans; they alone require ready and certain identification in order that their institutional theory and practice may be maintained; and hence they alone need to become bearers of the sacred blood-standards. The warriors belong to the tribe, and are distinguished by luxuriantly flowing hair, by the up-stepping movement from which the people derive their appellation, by their unique archery attitude, and by their dark skin-color; the boys count for little until they enter the warrior class; but on the females devolves the duty of defining and maintaining the several streams of blood on which the rigidly guarded tribal integrity depends.[1] Undoubtedly the blood-markings play an important rôle in courtship and marriage, but too little is known of the esoteric life of the tribe to permit this rôle to be traced.

In brief, the Seri face-painting would seem to be essentially *zoösematic*, or symbolic of zoic tutelaries, and to signify subspecific (or subvarietal) characteristics maintained by the clan organization and kept prominent by the militant habit of the tribe; at the same time it is noteworthy that the purely symbolic motive is accompanied by a nascent decorative tendency, displayed by the individual refinement of form and color in the symbol proper to each of the groups.

DECORATION IN GENERAL

Aside from the face-painting there is a conspicuous dearth of decoration or tangible symbolism among the Seri.

The symbolic or decorative modification of the physique would seem to be limited to two classes of mutilations, of which one was observed at Costa Rica in 1894 while the other is apparently obsolete. The observed corporeal modification is the absence of medial superior incisors of the females, in consequence of forcible removal at a period not definitely ascertained. The interpreter at Costa Rica was uncommunicative on the subject; Don Pascual opined that the mutilation formed part of an elaborate puberty ceremonial, and this opinion would seem to be corroborated by the condition of the cranium of an immature female examined by Dr Hrdlička; but since the half-dozen adult maidens at the rancho in 1894 were free from the mutilation while all the wives bore its gruesome trace, it would seem more probable that the custom is connected with marriage. Whatever the period of the infliction, Mashém's guarded expressions seemed to indicate that it was a mark of physical inferiority; and this suggestion, interpreted in the light of the Seri use of teeth as weapons of offense and defense, would seem to indicate that the mutilation is at once the badge of corporeal inferiority and a means of maintaining the physical superiority of the males—of course in that theoretically fiducial but actually forceful way characteristic of primitive culture.

[1] The essentially reactive nature of this law and custom is set forth passim, p. 204.

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relation may be considered to begin in the animal realm with organisms adapted to environment through physiologic processes, and to end in that realm of enlightened humanity in which mind molds environment through complete nature-conquest. In the serial scale so defined the various primitive tribes and more advanced peoples may be arranged in the order of mental power or culture-status; when the same arrangement will express in inverse order the relative closeness with which the several tribal minds reflect their environments. It follows that the lowly minds and craft of the Seri reflect their distinctive environment with exceeding, perhaps unparalleled, closeness, because of their very lowliness; it follows, too, that any other equally lowly folk imported into the region and perfectly wonted to it by generations of experience would equally reflect the physical features of the region in their craft and in their thinking; it follows, also, that if the Seri were transported into any other district of equally distinctive physical features, they would gradually adapt themselves to the new environment—though with some added intelligence, and hence with diminished closeness, as is the way of demotic development—in such manner that their craft and thinking would reflect its features. In a more general way it follows that those similarities in culture, or activital coincidences, which have impressed the ethnologic students of the world (notably Powell and Brinton), are normal and inevitable in primitive culture and of diminishing prominence with cultural advancement.

Social Organization

Among the Seri, as among many other aboriginal tribes, the social relations are largely esoteric; moreover, in this, as in other savage groups, the social laws are not codified, nor even definitely formulated, but exist mainly as mere habits of action arising in instinct and sanctioned by usage; so that the tribesmen could not define the law even if they would. Accordingly the Seri socialry[1] is to be ascertained only by patient observation of conduct under varying circumstances. Unfortunately, the opportunities for such observation have been too meager to warrant extended description, or anything more, indeed, than brief notice of salient points.

Clans and Totems

The most noticeable social fact revealed about the Seri rancherias is the prominence of the females, especially the elder women, in the management of everyday affairs. The matrons erect the jacales without help from men or boys; they carry the meager belongings of the family and dispose them about the habitation in conformity with general custom and immediate convenience; and after the household is prepared, the men approach and range themselves about, apparently in a definite

[1] A convenient term proposed by Patten.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

362 372 order, the matron's eldest brother coming first, the younger brothers next, and finally the husband, who squats in, or outside of, the open end of the bower. According to Mashém's iterated explanations, which were corroborated by several elderwomen (notably the clanmother known to the Mexicans as Jesusa María) and verified by observation of the family movements, the house and its contents belong exclusively to the matron, though her brothers are entitled to places within it whenever they wish; while the husband has neither title nor fixed place, "because he belongs to another house"—though, as a matter of fact, he is frequently at or in the hut of his spouse, where he ordinarily occupies the outermost place in the group and acts as a sort of outer guard or sentinel. Conformably to their proprietary position, the matrons have chief, if not sole, voice in extending and removing the rancheria; and such questions as that of the placement of a new jacal are discussed animatedly among them and finally decided by the dictum of the eldest in the group. The importance of the function thus exercised by the women has long been noted at Costa Rica and other points on the Seri frontier, for the rancherías are located and the initial jacal erected commonly by a solitary matron, sometimes by two or three aged dames; around this nucleus other matrons and their children gather in the course of a day or two; while it is usually three or four days, and sometimes a week, before the brothers and husbands skulk singly or in small bands into the new rancheria.

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Quite similar is the regimentation of the family groups as indicated by the correlative privileges and duties as to placement, as well as the reciprocal rights of command and the requirements of obedience. Ordinarily (especially when the men are not about) the elderwoman of the jacal exercises unlimited privileges as to placement of both persons and property, locating the abat, the bedding, the fire (if any), and other possessions at will, and assigning positions to the members of her family, the nubile girls receiving especial attention; she is also the arbiter of disputes, the distributor of food, etc; but in case of tumult, especially when children from other jacales are present, she may invoke the authority of the clanmother, whose powers in the rancheria are analogous to those of the younger matrons in their own jacales. Even when the men are present they take little part in the regulation of personal conduct, but tacitly accept the decision of matron or clanmother; yet in emergencies any of the women are ready to appeal for aid in the execution of their will to a brother (preferably the elder brother) of the family, or, if need be great, to the brothers of the clanmother. So far as was observed, and so far as could be ascertained through informants, these appeals are always for executive and never for legislative or judicative cooperation; but various general facts indicate that in times of stress—in the heat of the chase, in the warpath-craze, etc—the men hustle themselves into the initiative, while the women drop into an inferior legislative place. As an illustration of the ordination in some-

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1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU2

As an illustration of the ordination in some 129
what unusual circumstances, it may be noted that when the "Seri 562
belle" (Candelaria) refused to pose for a photograph she was supported 626
by the clanmother (Juana María) until the latter was placated by presents; and that when the belle refused to obey the mother's command—to the vociferous scandal of the entire group—Juana María appealed to Señor Encinas, as the conqueror of the tribe and hence as the virtual head of both rancho and rancheria. And when a younger Seri maiden (plate XXV) similarly refused to pose, and in like manner disobeyed her mother (again to the general disgust), the latter appealed to Mashém; when he, after first exacting additional presents for both girl and mother and a double amount for himself, put hands on the recalcitrant demoiselle and forced her into the pose required, despite the shrinking and tremulous terror perceptible even in the picture.

Commonly the regimentation of family, clan, and larger group appears 592
to be indicated approximately by the placement assumed spontaneously in the idle lounging of peace and plenty. A typical placement of a small group is illustrated in plate XIV. Here the family are assembled outside the jacal, but in the relative positions which would be assumed within. The matron (a Red Pelican woman) squats in easy reach of her few and squalid possessions; on her left, i. e., in the group-background and place of honor, sits the elderwoman of the rancheria (a Turtle); then comes the daughter of the family, followed by two girl-child guests of the group, the three occupying positions pertaining to chiefs or elder brothers or, in their absence, to daughters; opposite the matron sits a younger brother,[1] whose wife is a Turtle woman (daughter of the dame in the place of honor) and matron of another jacal. A few feet behind this brother (just outside the limits of the photograph reproduced, though shown on the duplicate negative) squats the husband, with his adze to the group and face toward the direction of natural approach; while the place belonging to the sons of the family on the matron's right is temporarily occupied by a White Pelican girl, together with a dog, notable in the local pack for largely imported blood and correspondingly docile disposition. The place for the babe, were there one in the family, would be on the heap of odds and ends behind the matron. As in this group so in most others, the place of the sons is vacant; for the boys are at once the most restless and the most lawless members of the tribe—indeed, the striplings seem often to ignore [858] the maternal injunctions and even to evade the rarely uttered avuncular [882] orders, so that their movements are practically free, except in so far as they are themselves regimented or graded by strength and fleetness and success in hunting.

The raison d'être of the proprietorship and regimentation reflected in 302
the everyday customs is satisfactorily indicated by that totemic feature 614
of the social organization revealed in the face-painting described in

[1] This man was one of those involved in the Robinson butchery on Tiburon Island a few months before the picture was taken; and he was one of those executed or transported for the affair during the interval between the 1894 and 1895 expeditions.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

462 ing field; though by far the greater part of their time is spent in listless lounging or heedless slumber under the incidental guard of roaming youths and toiling women. The matrons are the real workers in the tribal hive; they are normally alert and active, passing from one simple task to another, gathering flotsam food along the beach or preparing edibles in the shadow of the jacal, with an eye ever on material possessions and children; they frequently join in hunting excursions of considerable extent; they are the chief manufacturers of apparel, utensils, and tools; and the scions of Castilian caballeros are not infrequently staggered at the sight of half a dozen Seri women "milling" a band of horses, and at intervals leaping on one to kill it with their hands. The masculine drones are the more petted and courted by reason of their fewness, for during a century or two, at least, the women [162] [562] have far outnumbered their consorts—a disproportion doubtless tending in some respects toward the disintegration of the clan system and, reciprocally, toward the firmer union of the tribe.

[756] One of the most noteworthy extensions of feminine functions among the Seri is toward shamanism. So far as could be ascertained from Mashém and the associated matrons at Costa Rica, it is such baldness as Juana Maria who concocts the arrow "poison", compound both necromantic medicines and curative simples, cast spells on men and things, and even fabricate the stone arrowpoints and counterfeit cartridges; though unhappily the data are neither so full nor so decisive as desirable.[1]

562 623 Conformably with their prominence in proprietary affairs, the Seri matrons seem to exercise formal legislative and judicative functions; for not only do they hold their own councils for the arrangement of the domestic business of the rancherias, but they also participate prominently in the tribal councils (as explained by Mashém), and play important roles in carrying out the decisions of such councils—as when they cooperate with war parties as decoys, or journey across their bounding desert to spy out the land of the enemy.

614 On the whole, it would appear that the clan organization of the Seri conforms closely with that characteristic of savagery elsewhere, especially among the American aborigines. The social unit is the maternal clan, organized in theory and faith in homage of a beast-god, though defined practically by the ocular consanguinity of birth from a common line of mothers; yet the several units are pretty definitely welded into [619] a tribal aggregate by common feelings, identical interests, and conjugal ties. The most distinctive features brought out by the incomplete 562 investigation are the somewhat exceptional manifestation of property-right in the females, the singularly strong sense of maternal relation, and the apparent prominence of females in shamanistic practices as well as in the tribal councils.

[1] The agency of the women in applying the arrow "poison" was noted by Hardy; cf. p. 288.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

CHIEFSHIP

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The unformulated tribal laws of the Seri are intimately connected with leadership, which is, in turn, largely a reflection of personal characteristics; so that the tribal organization is about as variable as that of the practically autonomous herds of cattle ranging the Sonoran plains adjacent to Seriland. Indeed, just as the stock-clans enjoy a precedence on pasturage and at waterholes, determined by the valor and strength of the bulls by which they are led, so the Seri clans appear to be graded by the prowess of their masculine leaders, combined with the sortilegic success of the leaders' consorts; while, just as the leadership of the cattle shifts from band to band as the years go by, according to the fairly equal hazard of natural selection, so the clan dynasties of the human group rise, flourish, and decline in an endless succession shaped by the chances of birth and survival under a capricious environment, by the fate of battles internecine and external, and by various other factors. The instability of the Seri organization is demonstrated by the tribal changes recorded in history, as well as by the vicissitudes within the memory of Señor Encinas and others. At the beginning of the records the Upanguaymas were already exiled from Seriland proper [175] and apparently suffering from raids of their collinguals; within a century the Guaymas, also, were expatriated and nearly annihilated; then, in the early part of the present century, the Tepokas were extruded and (after a series of wars in active progress in Hardy's time) forced far up the coast to one of the poorest habitats ever occupied by any folk. So, too, throughout the Encinas régime the internal dissensions continued whenever the clans were not combined against aliens; and the veteran pioneer has seen much intratribal strife, attended by the rise and passing of many chiefs, both acknowledged and pretended, and often exercising chiefly prerogatives two or three at a time. This instability grows largely out of the fact that the essential unit is the clan, and that the tribe is nothing more than a lax aggregation; and it is measurably explained by the crude customs accompanying the choice of leaders.

562 614

As already noted, the clan organization is maternal, and the clan-mother is the central figure of the group; but the executive power resides in her brothers in the order of seniority—i. e., while the personal arrangement of the group is maternal, the appellate administration is fraternal. So far as could be ascertained, the form of government is clearly discriminable from that commonly styled avuncular; for, in the first place, the minor administration accompanying the control of property invests the elderwomen with exceptional legislative and judicative powers, while, in the second place, there are no old men (by reason of the militant habit), so that the reverence for age so assiduously cultivated in primitive life extends to matrons much more than to men. [888]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

condition characterized by absence of property and thrift-sense; while its most essential concomitant is extratribal antipathy too bitter to permit toleration of alien blood, or even of alien presence save under the constraint of superior force.

MORTUARY CUSTOMS

The prevailing opinion among the better informed Caucasian neighbors of the Seri is that the tribesmen display an inhuman indifference to their dead; and this opinion is one of the factors—combining with current notions as to cannibalism and arrow-poisoning and beastlike toothing in battle—involved in the widespread feeling that the tribesmen are to be accounted as mongrel and uncanny monsters rather than human beings.

The opinion that the Seri neglect their dead on occasion would seem to rest on a considerable body of evidence; Mendoza's record of the numberless neglected corpses of warriors polluting the air and poisoning the streams of Cerro Prieto in 1757 would seem to be unusual only in its fulness; and Señor Encinas, albeit so conservative as to repudiate the reputed anthropophagy and to recognize better qualities among the folk than any contemporary, declares that they are utterly negligent of their dead, save that when the bodies lie near rancherías heaps of brambles are thrown over them to bar—and thus to lessen the disturbance from—prowling coyotes. Quite indubitable, too, is the specific testimony of vaqueros to the effect that Seri raiders overtaken by the Draconian penalty of the frontier merely lie where they fall, even when this is well within reach of the tribesmen, Don Andrés Noriega's verification of his boast (ante, p. 113) being an instance in point. On the other hand stands the conspicuous fact (unknown to the frontiersman) that well marked cemeteries adjoin some of the rancherías of interior Seriland. The sum of the somewhat discrepant evidence accords with a characteristically unsatisfactory statement by Mashém, to the effect that the mourning ceremonies are important only in connection with women—i. e., matrons—because "the woman is just like the family" ("la muger es como la familia"); and this intimation, in turn, is corroborated by the single known instance of inhumation in Seriland, as well as by certain indirect indications connected with the scatophagic customs (ante, p. 213). On the whole it seems certain that the mortuary ceremonies attain their highest development in connection with females, the recognized blood-bearers and legislators of the tribe.

The special dignification of females in respect to funerary rites is without precise parallel among other American aborigines, so far as is known, but is not without analogues in the shape of (presumptive) vestiges of a former magnification of matrons in the mortuary customs of certain tribes. The vestiges are especially clear among the Iroquoian Indians, whose aboriginal society coincided with that of the

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

Seri at various points; witness the following passage from the Onondaga mourning ritual, as collected and translated by Hewitt:

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Now, moreover, again, another thing, indeed, our voices come forth to utter; and is it not that that we say, that far yonder the Hoyaner [chief of highest grade] who labored for us so well is falling away as falls a tree? So, moreover, it is these things that he bears away with him—this file of mat-carriers, warriors all, visible and present here; also this file of those who customarily dance the corn-dances [the women]—they go prosperously. And alas! How utterly calamitous is that thing that occurs when the body of this woman falls! For, verily, far yonder in the length of the file will the file of our grandchildren be removed! These our grandchildren who run hither and thither in sport, these our grandchildren who by creeping drag themselves about in the dust, these our grandchildren whose bodies are slung to cradle-boards, and even those of them whose faces are looking hitherward as they come under the ground.[1]

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The identifiable cemeteries of Seriland are few and small—much less populous than might be expected of a tribe numbering several hundreds for centuries, and able to maintain well-worn trails threading all parts of their rugged domain. Three graves were noted near the abandoned rancheria at Pozo Escalante; one was observed near a jacal skeleton at Barranca Salina; five or six were made out doubtfully on a low spur adjacent to Punta Antigualla; another was found near the rancheria midway thence to Punta Ygnacio; still another was doubtfully identified hard by a ruinous jacal just where the foothills of Sierra Seri descend to the plain stretching toward Punta Miguel; and this distribution may be deemed representative. A scant half-dozen perceptible graves were observed near the considerable rancheria of Punta Narragansett, which was numerously inhabited during the Dewey surveys of 1873; one was found adjoining the old jacal near Campo Navidad; but none were discovered in connection with the extensive rancheria on Rada Ballena. The largest known cemetery occupies the triangular point of shrub-dotted plain pushing out toward the site of the old rancheria at the base of Punta Tormenta; it comprises perhaps a score of evidently ancient graves, while two newer ones were found on the pebble bar beyond the jacales. When near the pebbly beaches the graves are marked by heaps of pebbles and small cobbles, commonly about the size of those used as hupfs, these cairns being 3 or 4 feet long, two-thirds as wide, and seldom over 12 or 15 inches in height; and most of the cairns are accompanied and enlarged by piles (ranging from a peck to a bushel) of the scatophagic shells already noted. The graves remote from pebbly beaches are marked by heaps of cholla stems and branches, rudely thatched with miscellaneous brambles roughly pinned

[1] MS in the archives of the Bureau of American Ethnology. A somewhat more obscure version was recorded by Hale in "The Iroquois Book Rites": "Now, there is another thing we say, we younger brothers. He who has worked for us has gone afar off; and he also will in time take with him all these—the whole body of warriors and also the whole body of women—they will go with him. But it is still harder when the woman shall die, because with her the line is lost. And also the grandchildren and the little ones who are running around—these he will take away; and also those that are creeping on the ground, and also those that are on the cradle-boards; all these he will take away with him." (Brinton's Library of Aboriginal American Literature, number vi, 1885, pp. 141-142.)

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

but as the vicarious and visible exponent of an ever-immanent beast-god—the clan tutelary; her appeals to her brothers for administrative aid are precisely parallel to her intuitive passage from zoomimkry into the field of mechanical chance defined by protolithic implements; and the appeal, like the execution of the law either by herself or by her brothers, is controlled and regulated in absolute deference to the zoic pantheon. Thus, the inchoate tribal laws, expressed in habitual lines of action and modes of thought, are by no means conscious products of human wisdom, but are confidently imputed to a superhuman wisdom on the part of myth-magnified beasts of a mystical olden time; and, similarly, the power of executing these laws is by no means cognized as conscious human faculty, but is faithfully imputed to supernal potencies of mythical monsters. Essentially, therefore, the tribal law is putatively *zoocratic;* and the social organization may justly be classed as a putative *zoocracy.*

To prevent possible confusion, it may be desirable to note specifically that the Seri government is not matriarchal in any proper sense. As pointed out elsewhere, matriarchy is not (at least among the American aborigines) an antecedent of patriarchy, but a correlative of that form of government; and it would be especially erroneous and misleading to designate as matriarchal a tribe like the Seri, whose chiefs and subchiefs (i. e., appellate clan-administratives) are invariably masculine. Neither would it be just, despite the dominance of matrons in legislative and judicative matters, to regard the tribal government as a gynecocracy, such as have been noted in various parts of North America—e. g., in Sonora, according to a current tradition as to the origin of the name of the province, and among the Pomo Indians of California, according to Cronise as interpreted by Powers;[1] for the actual control is exercised by the warrior brothers, while the ideal control is vested in that zoic pantheon of which the matrons are putative mouthpieces. Physically and practically the Seri government is an adelphiarchy, as already indicated; but in the minds of the tribesmen themselves it is an inchoate theocracy putatively headed by a pantheon of animate monsters, whose prelates are personified in the painted clan-mothers.

Summarily, then, the Seri are zoosematic in esthetic, zoömimic in technic, zootheistic in faith, and putatively zoocratic in government, while even the Seri tongue is so largely mimetic or onomatopoetic in form as to accord with the industries and institutions; and in view of the intimate interrelations between the several lines of activity, it would seem preferable to determine the culture-status from the coincident testimony of all the lines, but feasible to measure it in terms of any one or more of these activital lines.

Now, on comparing the characteristics of the Seri with those of other known tribes of North America, many resemblances and a few differ-

[1] Tribes of California, pp. 180–181.

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

Society

583 [515] Marriage is monogamous. The wife is bought, in spite of the poverty of the Seri. Santa Blanco paid 150 pesos in property for his wife. Chico Romero, a widower, paid more for his, a widow, "because she had three daughters, and a family with daughters is rich" (in expectation of bride prices).

591 562 The wife goes to live with the husband. A young couple lives with the young man's parents, perhaps in an annex to the house. "The man commands." Chico was emphatic on this point, and repeated that when his son married he would live with him, not with the girl's relatives. Both he and Santo have step-sons-in-law as well as daughters-in-law living with them, but this is because they are chief and boat-owner respectively; (and the sons-in-law are young).

833 [843] Copulation was said to take place immediately on marriage. McGee's statement of a period of continence being cited as the custom of a foreign tribe, the informant obviously wondered and laughed. Intercourse goes on during pregnancy; but not for some months after birth, for fear of a new pregnancy, which would be injurious to the child. A good man respects his wife at all times and does not constantly pursue her.

144 164 No half-breeds were seen, and the Seri declare they are free of venereal disease.

551 614 Nothing could be elicited from the informant as to anything like the group-inherited names of lineages, or clans, of the Yuman tribes.

768 When a woman dies, the widower may give the children to his dead wife's parents to raise. This is the only item learned that might point to McGee's "matriarchate"; but the informant may have been thinking of particular cases. His son lives with him, though he lost the boy's mother.

582 Cross-cousin marriage is as prohibited as that of parallel cousins. This is in accord with the sibling terminology for all cousins; but in view of the present small number of the tribe, the rule must work difficulty.

[587] A man does not marry his dead wife's sister. Apparently he may not. Nor is there levirate. The informant volunteered the question if marriage with step-daughters was permitted by other peoples. Being told of the Navaho custom, he seemed shocked.

606 183 Neither husband nor wife looks at or addresses either parent-in-law. In the isolated, small-group life of the Seri, this rule can hardly be adhered to with complete rigor, and its conspicuous carrying out was not observed; but then everything in their behavior is casual, informal, and slovenly.

607 The kinship system as recorded contains a note as to a woman not addressing her younger sister's husband by kinship term except

Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

*825 grounds. On the other hand, sometimes absence of a bird, the ibis for example, from Desemboque has been explained by lack of suitable mud.

Another sort of explanation for the presence or absence of a bird in a locality has been the presence or absence of fresh water. This was true of the dove which is said to be found near fresh water (for example in the Desemboque arroyo) which it drinks. This observation is not entirely amiss. Regardless of how far from fresh water the dove will nest, it does like to congregate near it. Still another explanation has been offered for the woodpecker and the humming-bird and the osprey. The humming-bird, they say, is rare where there are no trees. (This in view of its nesting habits and its feeding habits is not surprising.) The woodpecker, they think, must have a sahuaro to live in (quite correct) and this is why it is absent from the region of Infernillo where there are no sahuaros. The osprey, they say, also likes to live more in areas where there are sahuaros because it nests on the dry ones.

Parental Function

Here such meagre data as are available show that according to the informants rearing of the young among the birds is entirely the female's preoccupation and that the male has nothing to do with it. They repeatedly emphasized that "young do not know the father" or that "they are fed only by the mother." This hardly reflects the situation in nature, at least for a great many birds and especially for the song birds. But there is in the Seris, evidently, a streak of belief in the uselessness and uncooperativeness of the male in such matters. This belief is met up with time and again in many groups of animals, and probably represents a conventional attitude, not tempered by observational evidence.

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Dangerous Birds

*825 With the exception of the eagle, no bird is considered dangerous and the eagle, who is supposed to be able to lift and attack a man, earns its reputation only on hearsay.

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Bdalkin E-5 (1963-1965)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

*825 ence of feather. Uncertainty about the bat then is significant, considering the combination of traits. Other criteria may also be employed. Crabs are distinguished from some of the other marine crustaceans by their hairiness. Differences among the insects are suggested by general shape, hairiness and habitat although also certain features of behaviour sometimes suggested affinity.

Distinctions made within the groups coincide on the whole with the natural groupings, at least for the more conspicuous forms. Hence, comes the breakdown of fishes into two major categories: fishes proper on one hand, and mantas and sharks on the other, snakes and lizards among the reptiles and mammals proper and Cetaceans among the mammals. In a way the Seris' greatest talents appear to be in their ability to recognize the reptilians and amphibians. Here they confused only two species: the two small inconspicuous Utas.

[182] As for the ability to identify an animal, it is directly related to its economic importance and relative degree of frequency in the territory, as one may well expect.

[824] A movement represents the basic difference between animals and plants to the Seris. This is why a sponge is considered a plant while sessile molluscs are animals.

Sexing

Three tendencies distinguishing sexes run through the entire gamut of the animal forms, through all the classes except in the birds: the males are larger, darker and more brightly colored than are the females. These tendencies the Seris may combine in different ways. In the reptiles it is color pattern rather than size that suggests to them the male animal and while the male snakes tend to be darker than the females, in the lizards they tended to indicate the prevalence of the bright color in the males.

Then also in several groups very specific diagnostic traits are employed, as a rule in form of all sorts of extra appendages which are supposed to decorate the males. This is interesting, because it suggests the presence of such extra structures in the males rather than in the females, and, as has been seen from the text, these structures are often attributed to the males regardless of whether or not they really exist in them. The femoral ridge in the male lizards is an especially good illustration of this principle.

[182] There is also a suggestion that in one instance at least the Seris transpose their own social situation on the animals. The bees they claim have "chiefs" and these "chiefs" are males and they are also larger. Here socio-anthropomorphic interpretation is very clear.

But as indicated in the text, the sexing criteria differ often in different groups and it is only fair to show that birds represent an exception to the three major tendencies. The birds have sexes all right but the Seris cannot tell them apart. This requires no further commentary if we reflect why the Seris must think that way.

[182] Finally, there is one more interesting point:
[562] [P. 55 A]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

* 825 [182] [562] no temperamental differences between the sexes can be detected which would only suggest that here the Seris do not introduce the interpretations from their own social situations, because they do have very clear cut ideas of the temperamental differences between men and women.

Age

Here aboriginal knowledge is virtually non-existant nor have the Seris made much effort to try a guess. There are hints that sometimes they associate the length of life of smaller animals with the season, obviously because these disappear for the cold season. Another feeble tendency was for the older informants to suggest greater longevity of an animal than it was customary for the younger informants. Finally, what little knowledge there was, it was still perceptibly greater for the reptiles than for almost any other class and this is quite in line with the general state and complexity of the Seri knowledge of the natural history of these creatures.

Size and Weight

[182] Here occupational influences are overwhelming. The weight of fishes and mammals was on the whole correctly estimated — this associated with the economic importance of these animals. Same features in the reptiles came out only so-so on the general scale and here, surprisingly, not too well on the economically important marine turtles. A rule of thumb is applied (usually incorrectly anyway) to the birds while the remainder of animal groups is covered by gross ignorance and disinterest in this respect.

Development

In general Seri knowledge of the mammalian development is far ahead of the rest of the animals and progressively becomes more and more obscure with the decrease in size. Within this range, specific ideas differ and often are associated with the particular group of mammals. One classic example is fishes which they divide into the viviporous and oviporous with sharks and mantas in the first category and the rest of the fishes in the second. The distinctions between the egg laying animals and those that are born alive run pretty much through the entire kingdom. Insects are the sole exception here but this is largely because of the lamentable lack of knowledge by comparison with the other animals.

Sequential development generally also runs through all of the groups. The belief in the time sequences is so striking that it covers even such groups as the fishes, for here the details of the mating sequences are not understood and, according to the Seris, there must be a time lag between mating and the delivery of the eggs by the female. At other times, such sequences are expressed in another sort of cultural fiction. I have in mind the birds where one month each elapses between the delivery of the eggs, hatching out of the young and the flight of the nestlings.

Knowledge of the young litters or the number of eggs laid by the birds or the oviporous reptiles

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